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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6738  
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE  
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0634  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4172  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 7724  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5284  
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 1158  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1070  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 001056

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DEPT FOR EAP/MLS, DRL, AND IO  
PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/23/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: FEMINIST WRITERS' GROUP EXPRESSES OPTIMISM FOR  
BURMA

Classified By: P/E Chief Leslie Hayden for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

11. (C) Summary. Writers for a local feminist magazine expressed optimism for the future of democracy in Burma. They noted that the demonstrations in September differed from the 1988 demonstrations because this time the international community was watching. They also felt that a new generation had inherited the democracy movement in Burma allowing more space for fresh and creative ideas in the future. End SumQry.

12. (C) On October 23 Poloff met with a group of six feminist writers led by Dr. Anna May Say Pa. The group writes for a newly founded feminist magazine in Rangoon, funded by the Embassy's small grants program. Dr. Anna noted that the magazine does not represent feminism as understood in the West. She emphasized that her group aims to express all views, conservative and liberal, and to discuss them openly to explore opportunities for women of all religions and walks of life in Burma. She said that the next issue of the magazine will even publish an article by a man who holds more traditional and conservative views of a woman's role in society. The group also sponsors a class that teaches local women to use computers, a skill that many are afraid of learning, she said.

13. (C) When asked what they think lies ahead for Burma, the group appeared unified in their optimism. The demonstrations in September differed from the ones in 1988 because this time the entire world was watching. They explained that the attention the events received from the international community gave them hope, because it restricts the military regime. Countries that care about what happens in Burma will pressure those that support the regime; that alone means something, they emphasized. Closer trade ties now than in previous years forces the GOB to pay attention to other countries' views.

14. (C) The youngest member of the group, a woman in her early twenties who took part in the demonstrations, expressed her happiness that the demonstrations allowed her generation to join the pro-democracy movement. She elaborated that the large numbers of young students who marched in the protests gave her hope that the democracy movement in Burma would not

die with those students who led the protests in 1988. Her generation, she noted, could provide new and creative ideas to further their hopes for democracy in Burma.

15. (C) Comment. This group of women writers expressed optimism without fear, a view we have rarely heard since the crackdown in September. While they have high hopes for what the international community has power to do, they also realize that the transition to democracy in Burma is in their hands. End Comment.

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